

Remarks:

The applicant has corrected the typos in claim 11, and amended claims 1-3, 5, 12, and added new claims 17-25 to reflect the key inventive features of the present invention in view of the cited reference U. S. 5, 640, 565 to Dickinson. The independent claims 1, 2, 12, and new claim 18 define, respectively, the invention with features of any search inquiry is performed not only at the first local server but also at one or more other servers, and/or one of the servers is master server capable of transmitting any search inquiry to one or more designated slave servers. It is believed that Dickinson fails to teach or suggest the aforesaid features. In Dickinson, the cooperation between two workstations is such that the search will be directed to the publishing host for results only when the search does not produce any result in the local workstation. As now defined in the amended claim 1, a search inquiry will be conducted or performed not only at the local server where the inquiry is placed, but also at remote servers connected therewith. Therefore, it is believed that the amended claim 1 should possess novelty over Dickinson. Likewise, the method claim 12 is also amended to include this particular feature, and thus it is believed that the amended claim 12 should also possess novelty over Dickinson reference.

The new claim 18 contains this feature, and further defines, respectively, the present invention with a group of a master server and several slave servers, or a plurality of groups and each group has a master server and several slave servers. The amended claim 2, as independent claim now, defines one of the servers is master server capable of transmitting any search inquiry to one or more designated slave servers. Further features of the present invention have been defined in the dependent claims.

Dickinson does not teach or suggest such features. In particular, Dickinson discloses, in its column 8, lines 7-27, that when the information selected for retrieval (corresponding to the search inquiry in the present invention) does not exist at the workstation where the retrieval is sought the workstation will forward the retrieval to the publishing host where the original business card object is created. According to Dickinson, each business card

object within the system has its own publishing host associated therewith. This is to say that each workstation can be a publishing host. There is not any central master server in Dickinson as that defined in the amended claim 2 and new system claim 18.

Moreover, the system of claim 18 contains several centralized networks of business card systems, and each of them contains a master server, and the interface protocols are established for connection between master servers. Therefore, the search can be performed not only within the group having a master server and several slave servers, but also can be transmitted to the master servers of other groups and performed within other groups.

As discussed above, the present invention as defined in the amended claims should be clearly different from the cited Teare et al Patent and Wlaschin Patent. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention is patentable in view of the prior art, and the early allowance of the application is respectfully requested. In terms of functionality, in the system of the present invention of claim 18 or the amended claim 2, the master server forwards an inquiry to other (slave) servers for results, while in Dickinson the workstation (slave server) forwards the retrieval to the publishing host (a kind of master server) for results. This presents an opposite directions of data and command flow other than that of the present invention.

Further in view of system architecture the system of the amended claim 2 or the new claim 18 defines specifically a central master server acting as a coordinator of the whole system and being capable of transmitting any search inquiry to other servers, while in the system of Dickinson such transmissions occur in a distributed manner, i.e., decentralized. Therefore, Dickinson does not teach nor suggest anything about the novel features of the present invention mentioned above, nor renders the claimed invention obvious.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as defined in the amended and new claims must be novel over the cited Dickinson reference, and cannot

be obvious in view of Dickinson and any existing prior art. It is respectfully requested that the present application be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

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